DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 202 413 HE 013 935

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TITLE An Assessment of Student Attitudes and Awareness of the Health Services Program at Salem State College.
PUB DATE Jul 80
NOTE 32p.; Not available in paper copy due to marginal legibility of original document.

EDRS PRICE MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS *College Students; Females; Higher Education; Institutional Research; Males; *School Health Services; State Colleges; *Student Attitudes; *Student Needs; Student Participation; *Use Studies
IDENTIFIERS *Salem State College MA

ABSTRACT

Student attitudes and awareness of the health services program at Salem State College were studied. A questionnaire was administered to 312 randomly selected students, or 7 percent of the school population. Ninety percent of the respondents were between 16 and 25 years old. Findings indicate that although nearly 90 percent of the respondents were aware of the health service facility on campus, less than one-half had used the services. Most of the students who took advantage of the health services were resident women at the junior and senior levels. Those students who were most frequently unaware of the health services or had not used them were freshmen and sophomore men commuter students. Few students had used the hospital emergency room of the health services. Most of the respondents (62 percent) were unwilling to pay an increased health fee in order to expand the currently available services. Most respondents were covered by their parents' family health insurance plan, and therefore did not feel the need to be involved in the plan offered through the college. Although few students offered suggestions for expanding the programs of the health services, those suggested were: a first aid and CPR course, services of a dermatologist and dietician, and dental coverage/improved insurance benefits. Study recommendations and a sample questionnaire are included. (SW)

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ED202417

An Assessment of Student Attitude and Awareness of the Health Services Program At Salem State College

U S DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
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Dr. Ruth S. McClain
Associate Dean
Student Services
July 1980

SUMMARY. The data from this survey indicate that most of the students who take advantage of the Health Services program are resident women at the junior and senior level; a high degree of satisfaction with services is clearly indicated. Those students who are most frequently unaware of the Health Services or haven't used the Health Services are freshmen and sophomore men commuter students. Knowledge of the latter provides for an understanding of why this particular group would not support an increased Health Services Fee.

Few students have used the hospital Emergency Room of the Health Services; those that did choose the Emergency Room did so because the Health Services facility wasn't open at the time needed.

Most Respondents are covered by their parents' family health insurance plan, and therefore, do not feel the need to be involved in the plan offered through the College.

Although few students offered suggestions for expanding the programs of the Health Services, those suggested were: a first-aid and CPR course, services of a dermatologist and dietician; dental coverage/improved insurance benefits.

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I. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study was to gather data regarding student attitude toward, and awareness of, the Health Services Program of Salem State College. The results of the survey will provide the Health Services Advisory Committee with information and recommendations for program planning and development.

II. METHODOLOGY

This study employed the survey research approach utilizing the questionnaire as the vehicle for data collection.

STUDY DESIGN. A Sample of 312 students was chosen at random, via computer assistance, from the entire matriculated Salem State College day school population (4,697). The Sample represents seven percent (7%) of the population. The subjects in the Sample were represented in the following manner:

Sex:	Men	40%
	Women	60%
Residency:	Resident	12%
	Non-resident	88%
Class:	Senior	18%
	Junior	22%
	Sophomore	24%
	Freshman	36%

DATA COLLECTION. During the last week in March 1980, a survey questionnaire and cover letter were sent (1st class, pre-paid postage) to all 312 subjects selected for the study. After a period of two (2) weeks, a postcard was sent as a follow-up reminder to those subjuects who did not respond to the questionnaire. In an attempt to realize a high return rate, a second questionnaire and cover letter were sent (1st class, pre-paid postage) to the non-respondents by the end of the third week in April 1980.

INSTRUMENTATION. The questionnaire (see Appendix B) format, multiple choice and open-ended, included a series of items (question #1-5) devoted to demographic data. The purpose of the demographic items was to cross-tab particular characteristics of the Sample with selected survey items in an attempt to have a clear understanding about specific groups of students being served.

The content items (question #6-20) were designed in order to obtain data regarding both student awareness of the Health Services Program and their attitudes about the program. The instruments were coded numerically for purposes of follow-up only.

DATA ANALYSIS METHODOLOGY. Analysis of the data was conducted during May 1980 using the computer and the Statistical Package for Social Services (SPSS). The statistics utilized to analyze the data were: frequencies and percentages on items #1-18; 20; and cross-tabs: demographic variables #1-5 with variables #6-18; 20. A summary of the open-ended question, #19, was made by hand analysis. The report of this study is intended for the use of the Health Services Advisory Committee. In addition, the report will be submitted to the Vice President for Student Services.

ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

Introduction

DATA REDUCTION. The response to the various mailings is indicated by Table 3.1 below.

Table 3.1

RESPONSE TO MAILINGS

Mailing	Returns	% of Total
First Mailing	112	36%
Second Mailing (Follow-up Post Card)	38	12%
Third Mailing	66	21%
Total	216	69%

From the above, it can be seen that by employing a second and third mailing, the overall response to the survey was increased by thirty-three (33%) percent.

Some of the characteristics of the Study Respondents are quite similar to both the Study Sample and Salem State College Population. Tables 3.2 - 3.4 provide for a comparison of the Salem State College Population, Study Sample, and Study Respondents by residency status, class standing, and sex.

Table 3.2

COMPARISON OF SALEM STATE COLLEGE POPULATION, STUDY SAMPLE, AND STUDY RESPONDENTS BY RESIDENCY STATUS

	Resident	Non-Resident
	Percent of Total	
Salem State College Population	13%	87%
Study Sample	13%	87%
Study Respondents	9%	91%

Table 3.3

COMPARISON OF SALEM STATE COLLEGE POPULATION, STUDY SAMPLE, AND STUDY RESPONDENTS BY CLASS

	Senior	Junior	Sophomore	Freshman	Other
Salem State College Population	17%	23%	27%	33%	
Study Sample	18%	22%	24%	36%	
Study Respondents	21%	22%	24%	29%	4%

Table 3.4

COMPARISON OF SALEM STATE COLLEGE POPULATION, STUDY SAMPLE, AND STUDY RESPONDENTS BY SEX

	Women	Men
Salem State College Population	60%	40%
Study Sample	60%	40%
Study Respondents	61%	39%

Because data are not available regarding the age range or the ethnic origin of the Study Sample, a comparison of these two factors with the Salem State College Population and Study Respondents is not possible. Table 3.5, however, depicts the distribution of the Study Respondents by age range.

Table 3.5

AGE RANGE OF STUDY RESPONDENTS

Age Range	% of Respondents
16 - 20	50%
21 - 25	41%
26 - 30	5%
31 - 35	2%
36 - 45	2%

Thus, ninety-one percent (91%) of the Study Respondents fall within the two age ranges 16-20 yr. and 21-25 yr; this data is consistent with the age range of the Salem State College Population which is approximately 55% and 36%, respectively, for the two ranges.

ANALYSIS OF SURVEY ITEMS

Included in Appendix C is a copy of the survey with the results of each item reported by percentages. The data indicate that although nearly ninety percent (87%) of the Study Respondents are aware of the Health Service facility on campus, less than one-half (40%) of the Respondents had used the service. Of those individuals who did use Health Services, nearly ninety percent (88%) were either satisfied or very satisfied with the services they received.

Relatively few (14%) of the Respondents had ever sought treatment at a hospital Emergency Room in lieu of going to the Health Services Office. The primary reason for going to a hospital Emergency Room was because the Health Services facility was not open at the time it was needed. In addition, Respondents felt that the services offered at the Salem State College facility were either insufficient (21%) or unsatisfactory (13%).

Approximately, three-fourths (76%) of the Respondents are aware that they pay a Health Services fee of $5.00 per semester, yet less than one-fourth (14%) of the Respondents indicated knowledge of the Health Services Advisory Committee.

Less than one-fourth (16%) of the Respondents indicated that they subscribe to the Health Insurance Plan available through Salem State College. Of the eighty-four percent (84%) who do not belong to the plan, nearly two-thirds (64%) of the people indicated that

they are covered by their parents' or family health insurance plan.

Only a few suggestions were offered as ideas for expanding the Health Services program; those that were most frequently suggested were dental coverage, and improved insurance benefits. Other suggestions were:

> A First Aid Course, a CPR course, Health Counseling, expanded physician's hours, and the services of dietician and a dermatologist.

Most of the Respondents (62%) were unwilling to pay an increased health fee in order to expand the currently available services.

ANALYSIS OF CROSS-TABS

Cross-tabulation of demographic items with content items made possible the following information:

-More than one-half (58%) of the Respondents are aware of the physical location of the Health Services facility. Those students who do not know the facility location are most often male commuter freshman or sophomore students.

-Although most of the Respondents (75%) indicated an awareness of the Health Services fee, freshman commuters, both men and women, are more frequently unaware that they pay a Health Services fee.

-More than one-half (60%) of the Respondents indicated that they had not ever utilized the available Health Services. Those who do not use the services are most often male freshman commuter students.

-More than three fourths (84%) of the Respondents, regardless of class, sex, or residency status, are unaware of the existence of the Health Service Advisory Committee.

-More than three-fourths (84%) of the Study Respondents did not subscribe to the Health Insurance plan through Salem State College. Those students who did take advantage of the insurance plan were most often senior women who live in off-campus housing. Of the Respondents who did not chose the Salem State College plan, more than one-half (64%) were covered by their parents' or family plan.

-Those Respondents who have utilized the Health Services can be described, most frequently, as junior and senior women resident students.

-Two-thirds of the Respondents indicated an unwillingness to support an increased fee to expand the services offered. The group that appeared least supportive of the fee increase are freshman and sophomore men who either commute or live in the dormitory.

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

SUMMARY. The data from this survey indicate that most of the students who take advantage of the Health Services program are resident women at the junior and senior level; a high degree of satisfaction with services is clearly indicated. Those students who are most frequently unaware of the Health Services or haven't used the Health Services are freshmen and sophomore men commuter students. Knowledge of the latter provides for an understanding of why this particular group would not support an increased Health Services fee.

Few students have used the hospital Emergency Room of the Health Services; those that did choose the Emergency Room did so because the Health Services facility wasn't open at the time needed.

Most Respondents are covered by their parents' or family health insurance plan, and therefore, do not feel the need to be involved in the plan offered through the College.

Although few students offered suggestions for expanding the programs of the Health Services, those suggested were: a first-aid and CPR course, services of a dermatologist and dietician; dental coverage/improved insurance benefits.

RECOMMENDATIONS. The results of this survey have implications for programmatic, staff development, and financial planning.

A. Programs:

1. That a publicity series be initiated so as to bring continued attention to not only the Health Services that are offered, but the location of the facility;

2. That the Health Services staff explore further the level of interest in offering "mini-courses" in First Aid and CPR. Response to publicity about the mini-courses could be an index or guide for the level of interest and feasibility of such courses;

3. That new health insurance plans be reviewed carefully and thoroughly so as to get the most comprehensive student plan available; and

4. That in planning for future programs, consideration be given to providing seminars, workshops, or clinics, on the topics of dermatology and diet.

B. Staff Development:

1. That the Health Services Staff seek training or up-date skills through workshops, courses, etc. in order to teach the courses or workshops so suggested.

2. That the staff research extensively the student health insurance plan options available so as to make recommendations for more comprehensive health insurance coverage.

C. Financial Planning:

That consideration be given in budget planning for specialists to offer clinics in dermatology and diet.

In conclusion, this study was conducted for the purpose of assessing student attitude and awareness toward the Health Services Program at Salem State College. The Study Sample and Respondents closely represented the Salem State College population. Because of the latter, and a very high rate of response to the survey, the resulting data is deemed reliable and valid.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Salem State College
Salem 01970

JAMES T. AMSLER
President

April , 1980

Dear Student:

We recently mailed a copy of a Health Services Survey to students from Salem State College. You were a selected member of that group. If you have returned the survey, thank you for your assistance. But if you have not completed yours, would you please take a few minutes now to fill it out. It is very important to have a large number of students reply. Another copy of the survey is enclosed for your convenience.

Many thanks for your help and cooperation.

Sincerely,

Ruth S. McClain

Ruth S. McClain
Associate Dean of Students

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Just a reminder... have you completed and **RETURNED** your Health Services Questionnaire sent recently to you?

If so, **THANK YOU.** If not, please take a few minutes to do it now and drop it in the mail **TODAY.**

Many Thanks,

The Health Services
Advisory Committee

APPENDIX B

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Salem State College
Salem 01970

JAMES T. AMSLER
President

March, 1980

Dear Student:

The attached survey is an attempt for us to learn more about students' attitudes and feelings toward the Health Services Program at Salem State College. Your cooperation will enable us to further assist you with better services. This survey is sponsored by the Health Services Advisory Committee, however data collection and analysis will be accomplished by the Student Services Office.

Your immediate response to this questionnaire will help to make the results of this study a more accurate reflection of our students' viewpoints. Please complete this right now! It should take no more than ten minutes of your time. You may return it by mail as directed on the back cover of the questionnaire; NO POSTAGE IS REQUIRED.

I would like to assure you that your responses will be completely confidential. The numerical code appearing on your questionnaire is solely for follow-up purposes.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

Ruth S. McClain

Ruth S. McClain,
Associate Dean of Students

RSM:mrg

HEALTH SERVICES SELF - EVALUATION

Directions

Please complete this survey today and return it as indicated on the back cover. Mark your responses in the blank box provided to the left of each question.

1. **Residency Status: Where do you live?**
   - ☐ a. Dormitory (Peabody or Bowditch)
   - ☐ b. off-campus housing (live off-campus, but not at home with parents/spouse)
   - ☐ c. commuter from home (family residence)

2. **Class/Year**
   ☐ a. Freshman ☐ b. Sophomore ☐ c. Junior ☐ d. Senior ☐ e. Other

3. **Sex**
   ☐ a. female ☐ b. male

4. **Age Range**
   ☐ a. 16-20 ☐ b. 21-25 ☐ c. 26-30 ☐ d. 31-35 ☐ e. 36-45 ☐ f. over 45

5. **Ethnic Origin**
   ☐ a. Native American/Alaskan Native ☐ b. Afro-American ☐ c. Asian/Pacific Islander
   ☐ d. Hispanic ☐ e. White, not of hispanic origin ☐ f. Black, not of hispanic origin
   ☐ g. Cape Verdean

6. **Do you know that there is a Health Services facility on campus?**
   ☐ a. yes ☐ b. no

7. **Do you know where the Health Services Office is located?**
   ☐ a. yes ☐ b. no

8. **Are you aware that you pay a Health Services fee of $5.00 each semester?**
   ☐ a. yes ☐ b. no

9. **Have you ever visited the Health Services Office?**
   ☐ a. yes ☐ b. no

10. **If you answered yes to #9, how satisfied were you with the services you received?**
    ☐ a. Very Satisfied ☐ b. Satisfied ☐ c. Dissatisfied ☐ d. Very Dissatisfied

11. **Have you ever been treated at a hospital Emergency Room in lieu of going to the Health Services Office?**
    ☐ a. yes ☐ b. no

12. **If you answered yes to #11, what is the main reason you did not use the Health Services offered on-campus?**

☐ a. I didn't believe that the services offered were sufficient
☐ b. I wasn't aware of the on-campus service
☐ c. I have not been satisfied with the on-campus Health Services in the past
☐ d. The on-campus Health Services was not open at the time I needed it
☐ e. other

13. **Did you know that there is a Health Services Committee comprised of students, administrators, and Health Services staff?**

☐ a. yes ☐ b. no

14. **Did you subscribe to the Health Insurance Plan offered through Salem State College?**

☐ a. yes ☐ b. no

15. **If you answered no to #14, please indicate why you did not.**

☐ a. Too expensive
☐ b. I feel I have no need for this kind of insurance
☐ c. I did not know it was offered
☐ d. The coverage offered by this plan is inadequate for my needs
☐ e. I am covered by my parents' or family plan
☐ f. other

16. **How do you pay for your medical expenses?**

☐ a. Self ☐ b. School Insurance ☐ c. Parents/Family Insurance ☐ d. Other

17. **Do you have a family physician?**

☐ a. yes ☐ b. no

18. **Health Services currently offers the following services: Please place check by the Services you have utilized:**

☐ Daily physician hours ☐ Full-time nursing staff ☐ Weekly GYN clinic
☐ Referrals for medical problems ☐ Routine laboratory tests ☐ Health Counseling
☐ Unplanned pregnancy and birth control counseling

19. **What kind of services would you like to see included in the program if we could expand health services offerings?**

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

20. **Would you be willing to pay an increased fee if we could expand these services?**

☐ a. yes ☐ b. no

Thank you for your cooperation. Please turn the page for directions for returning your completed Survey.

Dr. Ruth McClain, Associate Dean
Student Services Office
Salem State College
Salem, MA 01970

When completed, please fold, fasten, and drop in mail. Postage is prepaid.

APPENDIX C

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Salem State College
Salem 01970

JAMES T. AMSLER
President

March, 1980

Dear Student:

The attached survey is an attempt for us to learn more about students' attitudes and feelings toward the Health Services Program at Salem State College. Your cooperation will enable us to further assist you with better services. This survey is sponsored by the Health Services Advisory Committee, however data collection and analysis will be accomplished by the Student Services Office.

Your immediate response to this questionnaire will help to make the results of this study a more accurate reflection of our students' viewpoints. Please complete this right now! It should take no more than ten minutes of your time. You may return it by mail as directed on the back cover of the questionnaire, NO POSTAGE IS REQUIRED.

I would like to assure you that your responses will be completely confidential. The numerical code appearing on your questionnaire is solely for follow-up purposes.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

Ruth S. McClain

Ruth S. McClain,
Associate Dean of Students

RSM:mrg

HEALTH SERVICES SELF - EVALUATION

Directions

Please complete this survey today and return it as indicated on the back cover.
Mark your responses in the blank box provided to the left of each question.

1. Residency Status: Where do you live?

9% ☐ a. Dormitory (Peabody or Bowditch)
18% ☐ b. off-campus housing (live off-campus, but not at home with parents/spouse)
73% ☐ c. commuter from home (family residence)

2. Class/Year

36% ☐ a. Freshman 24% ☐ b. Sophomore 22% ☐ c. Junior 18% ☐ d. Senior ☐ e. Other

3. Sex

61% ☐ a. female 39% ☐ b. male

4. Age Range

50% ☐ a. 16-20 41% ☐ b. 21-25 5% ☐ c. 26-30 2% ☐ d. 31-35 2% ☐ e. 36-45 2% ☐ f. over 45

5. Ethnic Origin INSUFFICIENT DATA

☐ a. Native American/Alaskan Native ☐ b. Afro-American ☐ c. Asian/Pacific Islander
☐ d. Hispanic ☐ e. White, not of hispanic origin ☐ f. Black, not of hispanic origin
☐ g. Cape Verdean

6. Do you know that there is a Health Services facility on campus?

☐ a. yes 87% ☐ b. no 13%

7. Do you know where the Health Services Office is located?

☐ a. yes 58% ☐ b. no 42%

8. Are you aware that you pay a Health Services fee of $5.00 each semester?

☐ a. yes 76% ☐ b. no 24%

9. Have you ever visited the Health Services Office?

☐ a. yes 40% ☐ b. no 60%

10. If you answered yes to #9, how satisfied were you with the services you received?

☐ a. Very Satisfied ☐ b. Satisfied ☐ c. Dissatisfied ☐ d. Very Dissatisfied
21% 67% 9% 2%

11. Have you ever been treated at a hospital Emergency Room in lieu of going to the Health Services Office?

☐ a. yes 14% ☐ b. no 86%

12. If you answered yes to #11, what is the main reason you did not use the Health Services offered on-campus?

21% ☐ a. I didn't believe that the services offered were sufficient
29% ☐ b. I wasn't aware of the on-campus service
13% ☐ c. I have not been satisfied with the on-campus Health Services in the past
36% ☐ d. The on-campus Health Services was not open at the time I needed it
☐ e. other

13. Did you know that there is a Health Services Committee comprised of students, administrators, and Health Services staff?

☐ a. yes 16% ☐ b. no 84%

14. Did you subscribe to the Health Insurance Plan offered through Salem State College?

☐ a. yes 16% ☐ b. no 84%

15. If you answered no to #14, please indicate why you did not.

2% ☐ a. Too expensive
6% ☐ b. I feel I have no need for this kind of insurance
9% ☐ c. I did not know it was offered
3% ☐ d. The coverage offered by this plan is inadequate for my needs
64% ☐ e. I am covered by my parents' or family plan
16% ☐ f. other

16. How do you pay for your medical expenses?

☐ a. Self 26% ☐ b. School Insurance 8% ☐ c. Parents/Family Insurance 60% ☐ d. Other 6%

17. Do you have a family physician?

☐ a. yes 75% ☐ b. no 25%

18. Health Services currently offers the following services: Please place check by the Services you have utilized:

21% ☐ Daily physician hours
14% ☐ Full-time nursing staff
8% ☐ Weekly GYN clinic
10% ☐ Referrals for medical problems
10% ☐ Routine laboratory tests
.5% ☐ Health Counseling
2% ☐ Unplanned pregnancy and birth control counseling

19. What kind of services would you like to see included in the program if we could expand health services offerings?

19% of the respondents answered this item. Of the 41 responses, only sixteen (16) were suggestions for new services; the remainder of the responses suggested services already available.

6%- First-Aid Course
6%- Expanded hours for Medical Director
19%- Improved Insurance benefits
6%- CPR Course
44%- Dental Coverage
6%- Dietician
6%- Health Counseling
6%- Dermatologist

20. Would you be willing to pay an increased fee if we could expand these services?

☐ a. yes 38% ☐ b. no 62%

Thank you for your cooperation. Please turn the page for directions for returning your completed Survey.

Dr. Ruth McClain, Associate Dean
Student Services Office
Salem State College
Salem, MA 01970

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